



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

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BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION REPORT

PER HB00-1314

PREPARED 1/21/2014



Legislation

The Colorado State Legislature passed SB 169 which allowed the state to reintroduce black-footed ferrets. Specifically, the legislation allows for the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets on private land with an accompanying Safe Harbor agreement and certificates of inclusion. The due diligence requirements on releases include contacts with local governments and any neighboring landowners who would potentially be impacted by such a release.

Of particular interest is that the legislation passed out of both house Agriculture and Natural Resources Committees on concurrent resolutions meaning that the bill was deferred to the floor of the House and Senate without debate. Additionally, the bill was promoted and sponsored by the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA). We offer our sincerest thanks to Terry Fankhauser and the members of CCA for their leadership in moving this bill to fruition. We also received critical testimonial support from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

Reintroduction:

On November 6, and the 13th, 2013, fifty three black-footed ferrets were released in Pueblo County Colorado on the Walker Ranch. The ranch is comprised of ~ 63,000 acres of which ~4,000 acres are occupied by black-tailed prairie dogs. The release was conducted under the protection of the new Safe Harbor agreement and accompanying certificates of inclusion. Over sixty guests attended the original release. These guests included county commissioners, legislators, wildlife commissioners, state and federal wildlife biologists as well as other agencies and representatives from several NGO's. The event was well covered by local, state and national media. Future monitoring of the release site will be conducted by CPW biologists in conjunction with USFWS personnel.

STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor • Mike King, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources

Bob D. Broscheid, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife Commission: Robert W. Bray • Chris Castilian, Secretary • Jeanne Horne

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Gary and Georgia Walker

Wildlife Health Program Sylvatic Plague Vaccine (SPV) - 2013 Research Update
(Dan Tripp)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) began conducting large-scale phase II sylvatic plague vaccine (SPV) field trials at Gunnison's and black-tailed prairie dog sites during summer-fall of 2013. The field experiments undertaken by CPW have been designed to evaluate the oral plague vaccine developed by USGS and evaluate efficacy of vaccination as a plague management tool. In 2013, 234 acres of Gunnison's prairie dog colonies at 3 paired study areas (6 sites) were treated with either vaccine or placebo baits and ~900 prairie dogs were marked with pit-tags for survival analysis of which ~300 were sampled (blood/whiskers) for analysis of bait uptake. An additional 600 acres of black-tailed prairie dog colonies at 3 paired study areas were treated and ~435 prairie dogs were marked with 260 of these individuals sampled for bait uptake. Small mammals were also captured on the study sites with ~190 individuals of 7 species marked and sampled in 2013. These Colorado field trials will continue through 2015 and complement vaccine efficacy trials that also began in other western states.